



January 31, 2024 / 21 Shevat 5784

Dear Judea Reform Congregation,

We are so delighted to announce the selection of Hannah Bender (they/them) as Judea Reform Congregation's Assistant Rabbi, beginning July 1, 2024! Last night our Board of Trustees met and voted unanimously to accept the Rabbinic Special Search Committee's unanimous recommendation, and Hannah has accepted the position with overwhelming joy.

Throughout the search process, our committee interviewed many strong candidates and initially anticipated three site visits for finalists. Because of the dynamic nature of the search and the rabbinic placement process, we are not holding a third site visit; we are so very fortunate to have matched with such an extraordinary soon-to-be-rabbi.

As we experienced in Hannah's site visit with us, they bring to the rabbinate and Judea Reform such tremendous gifts. Their presence on the bima is warm and engaging. Their passion for Torah, social justice, and creating congregations of embrace and inclusion fit perfectly with Judea Reform. You can learn all about Hannah by [visiting their website](#).

Per the terms of our Constitution, our congregation must vote to confirm this appointment. We will have a special congregational meeting on February 11th, at 11:00am for just this purpose. Our Constitution requires 10% of the membership, 63 households, to be represented at this meeting in order to form a quorum. We hope to see you there to help our congregation take this sacred and important step forward. Register below.

We want to express our heartfelt thanks to Beth Posner and Andrew Geller, Co-

Chairs of our Rabbinic Special Search Committee, who have steered this search process with devotion, wisdom, and love for Judaism. We are so grateful to all the members of our search committee for their leadership. They each gave so much time, energy, curiosity, and thoughtfulness into this process. The members of the Rabbinic Special Search Committee are listed below.

Laura Ades
Emily Berman
Leslie Branden-Muller
Kate Elengold
Rebecca Feinglos
Andrew Geller, Co-Chair
Amy Glass
Scott Josephs
Larry Marks
Ezra O'Mansky
Beth Posner, Co-Chair
Judith Ruderman
Cary Ward

We can not overstate how brightly our congregation shined during this search process. It was clear to all the candidates we interviewed that our community is a place where Jewish life flourishes through music and spirituality, study and learning, caring relationships, and righteous impact on our greater world. Thank you to all who have been a part of this process.

We are filled with hope and excitement as we share this news, and we look forward to welcoming Hannah and their partner Kelly Whitehead (who will also be ordained in the Spring!) in the months to come.

The Talmud teaches: *Aseh l'cha Rav, uk'neh l'cha chaver*. "Get yourself a teacher, find someone to learn with" (Pirkei Avot 1:6). In Hannah Bender, we have surely found ourselves a wonderful teacher, and we are so excited for the Torah we will discover together.

L'shalom,
Rabbi Matthew Soffer
Senior Rabbi

Aron Silverstone
President